

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 OES-06

EB-07 OC-06 CCO-00 AID-05 IO-13 OPIC-03 COME-00

TRSE-00 OMB-01 L-03 H-02 XMB-02 FEAE-00 IGA-02 CIEP-01

/101 W

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R 270928Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7428

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGUI 1407

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, US, CT

SUBJECT: US/CAR RELATIONS

REF: (A) STATE 174021; (B) BANGUI 1264; (C) STATE 158447
(D) BANGUI 1245

I CALLED ON PRESIDENT BOKASSA JULY 26 AND DELIVERED TO HIM
PRESIDENT FORD'S MESSAGE TRANSMITTED REF (A). BOKASSA WAS
ACCOMPANIED BY FOREIGN MINISTER FRANCK AND MINISTER AT THE
PRESIDENCY BANGUE-TANDET. BOKASSA EXPRESSED WARM APPRECIATION
FOR THE MESSAGE AND TOOK PARTICULAR NOTE OF THE PRESIDENT'S
HOPE THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES WILL CONTINUE TO
FLOURISH.

2. AS EVIDENCE OF OUR DESIRE FOR EXTENSIVE AND PRODUCTIVE
RELATIONS I REVIEWED WITH THE PRESIDENT THE PROPOSAL FOR A SATELLITE
DEMONSTRATION IN BANGUI (REPORTED SEPTEL). I ALSO INDICATED
TO HIM OUR INTENTION TO DEVELOP, AND IF POSSIBLE EXTEND, OUR
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND AID EFFORTS. I ALSO EXPRESSED USG'S
APPRECIATION FOR HIS CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR OUR VIEWS ON MAJOR
INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, SPECIFICALLY MENTIONING KOREA AND
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PURETO RICO. THE PRESIDENT ASSURED ME THAT HE HAD

ALWAYS SUPPORTED US INTERESTS AND WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO.

3. GOING ON FROM THIS SLIGHTLY EUPHORIC NOTE, I INDICATED THAT THERE WERE, HOWEVER, CERTAIN ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN US WHICH I HOPED COULD BE RESOLVED SO THAT, AS PRESIDENT FORD HAD SAID, OUR RELATIONS COULD CONTINUE TO FLOURISH. I BEGAN BY MENTIONING COMPENSATION FOR THE TWO INTERNATIONAL OIL COMPANIES AND THE ARREARAGES ON THE EX-IM BANK LOANS. I SAID THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE OF THE FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES WHICH THE GOCAR FACED, BUT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT A START BE MADE IN MEETING THESE OUTSTANDING OBLIGATIONS. BOKASSA RESPONDED POSITIVELY SAYING THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THESE ISSUES COULD PREJUDICE FURTHER ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM THE US. HE HAD UNFORTUNATELY NOT BEEN ABLE TO MEET WITH THE OIL COMPANIES' REPRESENTATIVES WHEN THEY LAST CAME TO BANGUI. HE WOULD HOPE TO DO SO ON THE NEXT OCCASION. HE THEN SAID THAT IN ORDER TO MOVE THESE ISSUES FORWARD HE WOULD LIKE TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED STATES TO DISCUSS THE ISSUES DIRECTLY WITH CONCERNED AMERICAN OFFICIALS AND TO WORK OUT IF POSSIBLE APPROPRIATE PAYMENT SCHEDULES. I RESPONDED THAT I THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT IDEA. HE SAID HE WOULD BE WRITING TO ME WITH A FORMAL PROPOSAL AFTER HIS RETURN FROM A PROJECTED TRIP TO BRAZZAVILLE NEXT WEEK. I STRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT THROUGHOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF INAUGURATING A SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF THESE ISSUES.

4. IN ADDITION I SUGGESTED THAT IF HE WISHED TO PROMOTE PRIVATE INVESTMENT AS WELL AS GOVERNMENTAL AID, IT WAS IMPORTANT TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES WITH AMERICAN INVESTORS. I POINTED TO THE OUTSTANDING DDI/SCED PROBLEM AS ONE WHICH UNFORTUNATELY WAS STILL UNRESOLVED. I SUGGESTED THAT WHATEVER HIS GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON THIS ISSUE MIGHT BE, IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF IT MADE ITS VIEWS KNOWN TO SCED THROUGH FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE ROGERS WHOM I UNDERSTOOD HAD WRITTEN TO THE PRESIDENT. THE PRESIDENT ACKNOWLEDGED RECEIPT OF THE LETTER AND SAID HE WOULD PROMPTLY REPLY TO IT. HE WAS WAITING FOR A REPRESENTATIVE OF SCED TO COME TO BANGUI TO DISCUSS THE ISSUES WITH HIM. HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE SCED RECOMMENCE OPERATIONS. ALL THAT WAS NECESSARY WAS FOR SCED TO OBSERVE THE TERMS OF ITS ORIGINAL CONTRACT, IN PARTICULAR

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THE OBLIGATION TO PAY ADEQUATE COMPENSATION TO ITS CENTRAL AFRICAN EMPLOYEES. I RESPONDED THAT I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT SCED WISHED TO TERMINATE ITS ACTIVITIES, AND IF THE PRESIDENT WAS SERIOUS IN WISHING IT TO RESUME, IT WAS ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT TO RESPOND PROMPTLY TO THE ROGERS LETTER, HE REITERATED HIS DESIRE FOR AN AMICABLE SETTLEMENT AND SAID THAT NONE OF THE ASSETS OF SCED HAD BEEN TOUCHED IN ANY WAY.

5. COMMENT: THE COMBINATION OF PRESIDENT FORD'S LETTER AND THE PROPOSED SATELLITE DEMONSTRATION, BOTH OF WHICH ENORMOUSLY PLEASED BOKASSA, CREATED AN ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH IT WAS POSSIBLE TO DISCUSS PRODUCTIVELY OUR OUTSTANDING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. I THINK IT WOULD BE HIGHLY DESIRABLE FOR US TO RECEIVE A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE PRESIDENT WHOM WE COULD STEER NOT ONLY TO APPROPRIATE USG OFFICIALS BUT ALSO TO THE PRIVATE INVESTORS WITH OUTSTANDING CLAIMS AGAINST THE CAR. IF THE DEPARTMENT BELIEVES APPROPRIATE, IT MAY WISH TO REPEAT THE PORTIONS OF THIS MESSAGE CONCERNING SCED TO OTHER POSTS INCLUDING PARIS, WHERE DDI DIRECTOR JOLIS IS CURRENTLY MEETING WITH HIS BANGUI REPRESENTATIVE COPPERMAN. DESPITE THE EXTREMELY POSITIVE TONE OF THIS CONVERSATION THE CONSTRAINTS ON EARLY RESOLUTION OF OUR DIFFERENCES REMAIN AS I DESCRIBED THEM (REF D). BOKASSA, HOWEVER, IS NOT ON NOTICE OF THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO THESE ISSUES, AND I THINK IS GENUINELY CONCERNED AT LEAST TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF SETTLEMENT OR RESOLUTION.

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